

Frequently Asked Questions About Year-Round Landscape Irrigation Conservation Measures and the South Florida Water Management District's Comprehensive Water Conservation Program

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Residents should always check with their city and county governments to determine if local landscape irrigation ordinances are in place.

Q: What is the District's Comprehensive Water Conservation Program?

A: In September 2008, the South Florida Water Management District adopted a Comprehensive Water Conservation Program to protect South Florida's water resources and help ensure sustainable water supplies by developing a lasting water conservation ethic throughout South Florida. The District is promoting water conservation for its many benefits in meeting the growing demands on the region's limited water supply.

The Comprehensive Water Conservation Program fosters a conservation culture with regulatory, voluntary and financial incentives, as well as education and marketing strategies. All of the components of the program are designed to build on and complement successful water conservation initiatives at the local, state and national levels. The dynamic and flexible program is designed to also evolve with any changes in Florida law and the District's progress in environmental restoration. Year-Round Landscape Irrigation Conservation Measures are one component of the program.

Q: What are the District's Year-Round Landscape Irrigation Conservation Measures in South Florida?

A: Year-Round Landscape Irrigation Conservation Measures include a rule establishing a two-day-a-week landscape watering schedule throughout the District, with a three-day-a-week provision for users in some counties. Conservation measures were developed with input from water users across the region over a series of public workshops and meetings of the District's Water Resources Advisory Commission work group. The Year-Round Landscape Irrigation Rule applies when the source of water for irrigation is a utility, lake, pond, canal or well.

Under the conservation measures, local governments across the region have the flexibility to adopt alternative landscape irrigation ordinances at their discretion, based on local water demands, system limitations or resource availability. Because several counties and cities have exercised this option, residents should always check local ordinances for watering days and times in their area.

2-Day-A-Week Watering, Year-Round Landscape Irrigation

In **OKEECHOBEE and OSCEOLA counties**, the Year-Round Landscape Irrigation Rule limits lawn and landscape irrigation to two days a week. Residents and business located in **BROWARD and MIAMI-DADE counties** must also comply with this two-day-a-week restriction according to local ordinance.

- Residents and businesses with an **odd-numbered** street address may water lawns and landscapes on **Wednesdays and/or Saturdays, only before 10 a.m. OR after 4 p.m.**
- Residents and businesses with an **even-numbered** street address, **no street address** or those that **irrigate both even and odd addresses** within the same zones, which may include multi-family units and homeowners associations, may water lawns and landscapes on **Thursdays and/or Sundays, only before 10 a.m. OR after 4 p.m.**

For more information, visit the South Florida Water Management District online at: www.sfwmd.gov/2days.

3-Day-A-Week Watering Option, Year-Round Landscape Irrigation

For **GLADES, HENDRY, MARTIN, MONROE, PALM BEACH and ST. LUCIE counties, and MUNICIPALITIES IN LEE county except in the City of Cape Coral**. A three-day-a-week watering provision to the Year-Round Landscape Irrigation Rule is available to users who reside in counties located wholly within District boundaries. Users may irrigate on two days, as allowed above, or may exercise the option and irrigate a third day.

- Residents and businesses with an **odd-numbered** street address may water lawns and landscapes on **Mondays, Wednesdays and/or Saturdays, only before 10 a.m. OR after 4 p.m.**
- Residents and businesses with an **even-numbered** street address **no street address** or those that **irrigate both even and odd addresses** within the same zones, which may include multi-family units and homeowners associations, may water lawns and landscapes on **Tuesdays, Thursdays and/or Sundays, only before 10 a.m. OR after 4 p.m.**

For more information, visit the South Florida Water Management District online at: www.sfwmd.gov/2days.

Q: Does the District's Year-Round Irrigation Rule allow for additional watering days and times for irrigating newly planted lawns and landscaping?

A: Yes. Additional watering for up to 90 days is allowed following the installation of new lawns and landscaping.

- On the day new landscaping is installed, new plantings and the soil may be irrigated once without regard to the normally allowable watering days and times. Soil irrigation is also allowed immediately prior to planting.

- New plantings that have been in place for **30 days or less** may be watered on **Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and/or Sundays**, only **before 10 a.m. and/or after 4 p.m.**
- New plantings that have been in place from **31 to 90 days** may be watered on **Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and/or Saturdays**, only **before 10 a.m. and/or after 4 p.m.**
- Irrigation is limited to the areas containing new landscaping only. An entire irrigation zone may be watered only if new landscaping is planted on at least 50 percent of that zone. If new landscaping is planted on less than 50 percent of an irrigation zone, only the new plantings may be watered.

Q: In addition to Broward and Miami-Dade counties, in what areas are local landscape irrigation ordinances in place and what are those restrictions?

A: Local landscape irrigation ordinances are also in place in **CHARLOTTE, COLLIER, HIGHLANDS, ORANGE, POLK and UNINCORPORATED LEE counties**, and in the **CITY OF CAPE CORAL** in Lee County.

Residents should always check with their city and county governments to determine if local landscape irrigation ordinances are in place.

In CHARLOTTE, HIGHLANDS and POLK counties, irrigation is limited to one day a week according to water shortage orders established by the Southwest Florida Water Management District

Irrigation is allowed **one day a week** on properties **under two acres** in size only **before 8 a.m. OR after 6 p.m.**

Irrigation is allowed **one day a week** on properties **two acres or larger** in size only **before 10 a.m. OR after 4 p.m.**

- Addresses with numbers ending in:
 - **0 or 1** may irrigate on **Mondays**.
 - **2 or 3** may irrigate on **Tuesdays**.
 - **4 or 5** may irrigate on **Wednesdays**.
 - **6 or 7** may irrigate on **Thursdays**.
 - **8 or 9, or addresses without a number**, may irrigate on **Fridays**.

In **POLK County only**, reclaimed water customers may irrigate between **midnight and 8 a.m. OR between 6 a.m. and midnight** on the following schedule:

- **Even-numbered addresses** may water on **Tuesdays and Saturdays**.
- **Odd-numbered addresses or no address number** may water on **Wednesdays and Sundays**.

New Landscaping in CHARLOTTE, HIGHLANDS and POLK counties

Unless your city or county has a similar or more stringent local standard, the allowable "new plant establishment period" for all plant material is 60 days total.

- Beginning the day of installation, the new landscaping in place from **1 to 30 days** may be watered on **any day of the week**.

- New landscaping in place from **31 to 60 days** may be watered approximately **every other day**.
- **Even-numbered addresses** may only water on **Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays**.
- **Odd-numbered addresses** may only water on **Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays**.
- On the day the plant material is installed, extra watering is allowed only **ONCE** during otherwise restricted hours.
- After the day of installation, this extra watering must be accomplished during allowable watering hours.
- The extra "establishment period" watering is limited to new plant material. An entire zone in an irrigation system, however, may be used if the area the zone covers contains at least 50% new plant material. Irrigation system zones containing less than 50% new plant material must be watered by some other means, such as hand-watering or a soaker hose, so that only the new plant material is irrigated.
- Unless your city or county further restricts this use, low-volume watering, such as micro-irrigation, soaker hoses and hand watering, of flower beds, shrubs and other non-lawn plants is allowed on any day and at any time, if needed.
- A petition for a variance is available if a property proposes an alternative irrigation plan, such as splitting a large property into two pieces and assigning a different day to each. Check with Southwest Florida Water Management District, <http://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/> to confirm that your situation requires a variance. Some circumstances receive automatic exemptions.

For more details, visit the Southwest Florida Water Management District online at: <http://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us>.

In COLLIER County, landscape irrigation is limited to three days a week according to local ordinance

- **Odd-numbered addresses** may water **Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays** from **12:01 a.m. to 8 a.m.**
- **Even-numbered addresses** may water **Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays** from **12:01 a.m. to 8 a.m.**
- At any address, low-volume hand watering is allowed on any day from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

New Landscaping in COLLIER County

- At **any address** with new landscaping in place for **less than 60 days**, irrigation is allowed five days each week, **Mondays through Fridays**, from **12:01 a.m. to 8 a.m.**
- Low-volume hand watering is allowed anytime.

For more details, visit Collier County online at: <http://www.colliergov.net/>.

In UNINCORPORATED LEE County, landscape irrigation is limited to two days a week according to local ordinance

- **Odd-numbered addresses** may irrigate on **Wednesdays and/or Saturdays** from **12 a.m. to 9 a.m. and/or from 5 p.m. to 11:59 p.m.**
- **Even-numbered addresses** or properties with no address may irrigate on **Thursdays and/or Sundays** from **12 a.m. to 9 a.m. and/or from 5 p.m. to 11:59 p.m.**
- Irrigation is not allowed on Mondays, Tuesdays or Fridays and on any day between 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For more details, visit Lee County online at: <http://www.3.leegov.com/utilities/>

In ORANGE County, lawn and landscape irrigation is limited to two days a week according to the year-round landscape irrigation ordinance established by the St. Johns River Water Management District

- Residents with an **odd-numbered** street address or no street address may water lawns and landscapes on **Wednesdays and/or Saturdays**, only **before 10 a.m. OR after 4 p.m.** during Daylight Savings Time.
- Residents with an **even-numbered** street address may water lawns and landscapes on **Thursdays and/or Sundays**, only **before 10 a.m. OR after 4 p.m.** during Daylight Savings Time.
- Non-residential properties may water lawns and landscapes on **Tuesdays and Fridays**, only **before 10 a.m. OR after 4 p.m.**
- Water for no more than one hour per irrigation zone.

For more details, visit the St. Johns River Water Management District online at: <http://sjr.state.fl.us/>.

In CAPE CORAL, lawn and landscape irrigation is restricted to two days a week according to a local landscape irrigation ordinance

- **Residential addresses ending in:**
 - **0** may water on **Mondays and/or Fridays** from **12:01 a.m. to 4 a.m.**
 - **1** may water on **Mondays and/or Fridays** from **4 a.m. to 8 a.m.**
 - **2 and 4** may water on **Thursday and/or Sunday** from **12:01 a.m. to 4 a.m.**
 - **3 and 5** may water on **Wednesdays and/or Saturdays** from **12:01 a.m. to 4 a.m.**
 - **6 and 8** may water on **Thursdays and/or Sundays** from **4 a.m. to 8 a.m.**
 - **7 and 9** may water on **Wednesdays and/or Saturdays** from **4 a.m. to 8 a.m.**
- **Residential duplexes, multi-family units and non-residential** including office buildings, commercial complexes, retail shopping centers, government buildings, schools and homeowners associations:
 - May irrigate **Mondays and Fridays** from **12:01 a.m. to 8 a.m.**

New Landscaping in CAPE CORAL

- On the first day new landscaping is installed it can be watered without regard to restrictions.
 - **From 2 days to 30 days**, new landscaping can be irrigated **Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and/or Sundays from 12 a.m. to 10 a.m. and/or 4 p.m. to 11:59 p.m.** Irrigation is not allowed on Fridays.
 - **From 31 days to 60 days**, new landscaping can be irrigated **Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and/or Saturdays from 12 a.m. to 10 a.m. and/or 4 p.m. to 11:59 p.m.**
- Additional watering days can only be used to benefit new landscaping, and an entire irrigation system zone may only be watered if it contains at least 50% new landscaping.
- New landscaping should be installed within a reasonable time from the date of purchase and verified with a receipt or invoice.

For more details, visit Cape Coral online at: <http://www.capecoral.net/>.

Q: Are there any types of irrigation methods that are exempt from District Year-Round Landscape Irrigation Conservation Measures?

A: Yes. Low-volume hand-watering, low-volume irrigation, micro-irrigation, and irrigation with water from a rain barrel, cistern or other rain-harvesting device is allowed at any time. However, a voluntary reduction in use is encouraged, and landscape irrigation conducted with such systems should not produce water runoff.

Low-volume hand-watering - using a hose with an attached automatic shut-off or trigger nozzle.

Low-volume irrigation - using equipment and devices specifically designed to deliver the smallest amount of water needed by the plant being irrigated and to put the water in the plant's root zone.

Micro-irrigation - delivering small amounts of water on or below the soil surface. Drops or tiny streams of water spray through emitters or applicators placed along a water delivery line. This includes bubbler, drip, trickle, mist or microspray, and subsurface irrigation methods.

Rainwater harvesting - the collection and storing of rainwater for irrigation or other non-potable uses. In typical residential applications, roof catchment systems channel rainwater into onsite storage (usually cisterns or rain barrels) via the home's system of gutters and pipes.

Q: Are there any limits in the District's Year-Round Landscape Irrigation Rule for residents and businesses using reclaimed water and/or supplemented reclaimed water for irrigation?

A: No. Water from a reclaimed water system can be used anytime. To promote the most efficient use of this resource, the District encourages reclaimed users to irrigate

lawns and landscapes **before 10 a.m. OR after 4 p.m.**, and to apply no more than three-quarters to an inch of water per week and/or operate irrigation systems for no more than 30 minutes per zone.

Reclaimed water is produced by thoroughly treating the liquids collected at waste water treatment plants.

Supplemented reclaimed water is reclaimed water which has been augmented with groundwater or surface water by a public or private water supply utility.

Reclaimed and supplemented reclaimed water is not meant for drinking and is used almost exclusively for irrigation. Both types of water are usually transferred through purple pipes.

Q: Are South Florida Water Management District Year-Round Landscape Irrigation Conservation Measures mandatory?

A: Yes. Irrigation landscape limits are mandatory and are enforced by the South Florida Water Management District, local governments and law enforcement agencies. Residential fines are set by the local government and vary, but typically range from \$25 to \$125 for a first offense.

Q: Can I apply for permission to change my watering days or times under the South Florida Water Management District Year-Round Landscape Irrigation Rule?

A: Yes. Under certain conditions, you may request an alternative irrigation schedule. For more information, please visit www.sfwmd.gov/2days.

Q: Why are Year-Round Landscape Irrigation Conservation Measures an important component of the District's Comprehensive Water Conservation Program?

A: Measures in the District's Comprehensive Water Conservation Program, including year-round watering limits, are designed to accomplish a measurable change in water use. Consider that:

- Up to one-half of all potable water produced in our region goes to outdoor irrigation.
- More than 50 percent of the water applied to lawns may be lost to evaporation or run-off because of over-watering.
- Improved irrigation efficiency enhances landscape quality; helps to stretch local water supplies; and helps protect and sustain local water resources for area residents and the environment.
- The potential water savings from Year-Round Landscape Irrigation Conservation Measures is substantial. Due to similar measures in place during the recent water shortage, a total savings of 138.8 million gallons of water per day was achieved in seven counties alone over a six-month period.

Q: Are there other components to the South Florida Water Management District's Comprehensive Water Conservation Program?

A: Yes. Components and key strategies of the plan include:

- Goal-based conservation planning, implementation and improved reporting for large, permitted water users.
- Conservation-based rate structures for utilities designed to encourage water savings and discourage high-volume use.
- The retrofitting of outdated, water-guzzling plumbing devices. Adopting and incorporating Florida-friendly landscaping principles.
- Water conservation education strategies, including classroom education, social marketing and professional development.
- A call for governments and large users to lead by example.

Q: How much water does a lawn or landscape need?

A: Proper irrigation is based on the amount of water each lawn needs. Lawns and landscapes typically need to receive only three-quarters to an inch of water each week. The lawn may not need to be watered at all if it has rained during the week. Most shrubs and trees do not need any supplemental irrigation once they are established in the landscape.

Q: Where can I learn more about the District's Comprehensive Water Conservation Program?

A: More information about the program is available on the South Florida Water Management District's Water Conservation Web site at www.savewaterfl.com and www.sfwmd.gov/2days.